

MAORI WELFARE

ORGANIZATION AND STAFFING

The Maori welfare organization continues to play an effective and important part in its own special sphere of departmental activity, linking up effectively and harmoniously with all other branches of the Department. The circle of its operations tends to widen year by year, and as a result of the efforts of the Welfare Officers, Tribal Executives, and Tribal Committees widespread interest is now being taken in the Welfare Division, and the Maori population itself has come to regard its activities as being directed towards their own social and economic advancement.

This interpretation of the spirit of the Act by the efforts of the Department's officers has only been made possible by the willing co-operation of the majority of the Maori people.

It is gratifying indeed to report that during the year the Ngati-porou tribe and its associate tribe, the Whanau-Apanui tribe, elected to come under the Maori Social and Economic Advancement Act, and as a result a marked interest in the welfare of their own people has already been manifested. With the exception of the Waikato tribes, both the North and the South Islands are now organized under the Act. At a recent meeting at Tuakau, however, Princess Te Puca agreed to the formation of Tribal Committees in the Waikato area, and the Controller of Maori Social and Economic Advancement recently visited the southern Waikato in connection with the organization under the Act.

At the 31st March last there were 63 Tribal Executives and 381 Tribal Committees formed, approved, and operating. These Committees are now settling down to a better appreciation of their functions, and a general forward move is anticipated next year in the well-being of the Maori people.

SUBSIDIES

To encourage the Maori people to marshal and utilize their financial resources for their own advantage certain subsidies are payable under the Act, a sum of money being appropriated yearly for this purpose by Parliament. For the year under review, £10,000 was provided, and the total claims for subsidy amounted to £16,402. This means that a total of £32,804 is being applied for the physical, economic, social, educational, and moral benefit and advancement of the Maori people.

Budgets submitted by the Tribal Executives and Committees for the next year already exceed £20,000, and this would indicate that the Maori people are appreciating the advantages available under the Act. It is obvious, too, that these people realize that any investment they may make in their own welfare will be responded to by the Government.

WOMEN'S HEALTH LEAGUES

There are now 108 leagues in existence, 85 having been formed through the efforts of the Maori Welfare Officers, the other 23 having been formed prior to the passing of the Act. The objects of the Women's Health Leagues—mothercraft and housecraft—are most worthy ones, and there is no doubt that, if wisely developed, the League is destined to play a vital part in the lives of the Maori women and their families. Realizing the importance of these objects, the Welfare Division has applied itself to the formation of leagues throughout the districts under its control. Over the last twelve months leagues have been formed in Northland, Auckland City, East Coast, Gisborne, Wairoa, Hawkes Bay, Wairarapa, and Wanganui districts. The movement has expanded to such an extent that it has been found necessary to create a national body to co-ordinate and govern the activities. The constitution of this national body will be finalized at a general conference of Health Leagues to be held in Rotorua in September next.